HISTORY OF THE WORD 'ĪŚVARA' AND ITS IDEA

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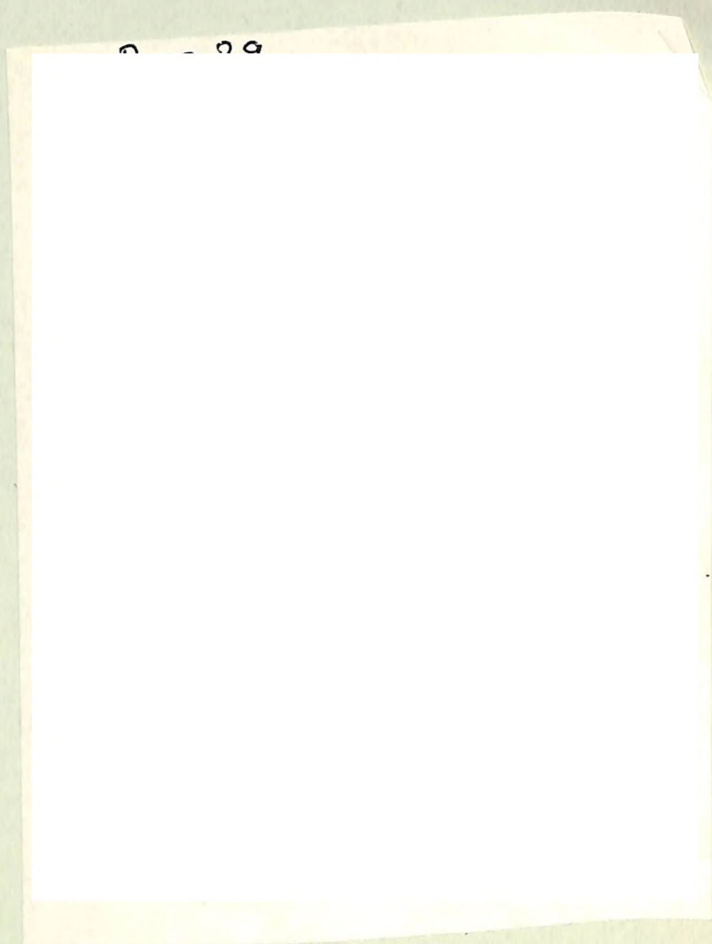
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IV.—HISTORY OF THE WORD 'ĪŚVARA' AND ITS IDEA

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Probably there is no other Sanskrit word whose history (including that of its idea) is so interesting and can throw such a vast light on the history of the development of religious as well as philosophical thought in India as that of the word 'Īśvara'; and if the conclusions arrived at in this paper are true, they go a long way in determining the chronology of several literary works also.

What led us to this investigation? The question can be answered in the following way. The word 'Īśvara' is now-a-days used, in common parlance, in the sense of 'omnific, omnipresent, Supreme God.' Excepting the sectarian words like 'Śiva', 'Viṣṇu', 'Rāma', 'Kṛṣṇa', there is probably no other non-sectarian word which is so commonly used among the Hindus for the idea of God, as the word 'Īśvara' (or 'Parameśvara'). Apart from this popular use, in Sanskrit literature also, the word 'Īśvara' is generally used in the same sense. In the philosophical Sanskrit literature and especially in the Nyāya and Yoga

literature the same word is used to express the idea of Supreme God. As opposed to all this we find that throughout the Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini and the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali this word has been *consistently* used, as shown below, in the sense of a *rājā* or an administrative head. This striking difference in the use of the word strongly urged us to investigate its history.

An examination into the real meaning of the word 'Aiśvarya' also urged us to this investigation. This word is evidently derived from the word 'Īśvara', and is used in the sense of worldly prosperity in the form of wealth, house, animals, servants, etc. It never refers to the spiritual powers or achievements of sages and saints, for which the proper words are 'Siddhi' 'Śakti.' This shows clearly that the word 'Aiśvarya' was originally derived from the word 'Īśvara' having the sense of a 'rājā' or an administrative head and not of Parameśvara. The word 'Aiśvarya' being very old, the former sense of the word 'Īśvara' must also be older than its latter sense.

An almost exhaustive survey of the Sanskrit literature shown below also leads us to the same conclusion.

The Vedic Saṁhitās.

Let us first start with the Vedic Saṁhitās. The word 'Īśvara' has not been used, even once, in the

Ṛgveda Saṁhitā; though the root *Īś* from which the word is derived is often used; e. g. मा नो दुःशंस ईशत । (Ṛg. I. 23,9), अयमग्निः सुवीर्यस्येशे । महः सौभगस्य (Ṛg. III. 16, 1). The word 'Īśāna' which is derived from the same root and is thus akin to the word 'Īśvara' is used in the Ṛgveda in the sense of 'a ruler' and is generally used for Indra and other gods; e. g. ईशानो यवया वधम् (Ṛg. I. 5, 10).

The root *Īś* is used in the same way in the other Saṁhitās also. The meaning of the word 'Īśāna' seems to be gradually changing in the other Saṁhitās. In the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda the word has been sometimes used as an adjective of Agni; but mostly it is used for S'iva or Rudra. The latter tendency went on increasing until the word became a regular synonym of S'iva in the later Sanskrit literature. As our discussion is mainly concerned with the word 'Īśvara', we need not, any further, refer to this word here.

The word 'Īśvara' is not used in the (Śukla) Yajurveda Saṁhitā also. Of course the word 'Īś, as a noun and apparently in the sense of Parameśvara, has been used in the 40th Adhyāya of this Saṁhitā. But in this connection we must remember two things. Firstly, this 40th Adhyāya is really an Upaniṣad and is also known by the title of 'Īśāvāsyopaniṣad'. Secondly,

when we consider such passages of this chapter as "यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद् विजानतः । तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥" and "योऽसावादित्ये पुरुषः सोऽसावहम्", it becomes clear that the word *Is* has been used here more in the sense of Paramātman, the supreme self (or Brahman), than in the sense of Parameśvara or supreme God. But it need not detain us here as we are concerned here only with the word 'Īsvara'.

The word 'Īsvara' has not been used, even once, in the Sāmaveda Saṁhitā also. The case is however different with the Atharvaveda Saṁhitā. Here for the first time we meet with this word in five passsages. They are :—

(1) मा मा हिंसिषुरीश्वराः (Ath. VII. 107, 1).

It is to be noticed here that the word has been used in the plural number and refers to Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya.

(2) प्राणाय नमो यस्य सर्वमिदं वशे ।
यो भूतः सर्वस्येश्वरो यस्मिन्सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम॥ (Ath.XI.6,1).

(3) प्राणो ह सर्वस्येश्वरो यच्च प्राणिति यच्च न । (Ath. XI. 6, 10).

It is clear that the word 'Īśvara' which refers to Prāṇa and is used with सर्वस्य, has not yet got the later sense of Pārameśvara.

(4) पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यद् भूतं यच्च भाव्यम् ।
उतामृतत्वस्येश्वरो यदन्येनाभवत्सह ॥ (Ath. XIX.6,4).

This stanza, with a variant reading, also occurs in the Yajurveda, and there, instead of *Íśvaraḥ*, we find *Íśānaḥ*. This very fact shows clearly that here also the word has been used in its ordinary sense of a lord or master.

(5) कालो ह सर्वस्येश्वरो यः पितासीत्प्रजापतेः । (Ath. XIX. 53, 8).

The above remarks equally apply to this case also.

That the word 'Īśvara' in all these Vedic passages has not yet got its later sense of Parameśvara and has been used only in the ordinary sense of a lord or master is confirmed by the following evidence of the Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta—which serve the purpose of a Vedic dictionary. The Nighaṇṭu (II, 22) says: "राष्ट्री, अर्यः, नियुत्वान्, इनः । इति चत्वारि ईश्वरनामानि". The Nirukta while commenting upon this quotes a stanza containing the expression "इनो विश्वस्य भुवनस्य गोपाः" and in its twofold explanation says:—(1) "ईश्वरः सर्वेषां भूतानां गोपायितादित्यः" and (2) सर्वेषामिन्द्रियाणां गोपायितात्मा". In both these passages 'Īśvara' has been clearly used in its ordinary sense of a master or a *rājā*; and there is no trace here of its later sense of Parameśvara.

The Brāhmaṇas.

In the Brāhmaṇa literature also the word 'Īśvara' is used very rarely; and whenever it is found it is

almost invariably used in the sense of 'competent' or 'capable of', there being no trace of its later sense of Parameśvara ; e. g.—

ईश्वरः पर्जन्योऽवर्ष्टोः (Ait. Br. III. 18),
ईश्वरो ह्यनृणा कर्तोः (Ait. Br. I. 14),
अश्नीयातामीश्वरौ जनयितवै (S'atapatha Br. XIV. 9, 4, 13),

तस्येश्वरः कुलं विक्षोब्धोः (S'a. Br. I. 1, 2, 22),
ईश्वर एनं द्वेष्टोः (S'a. Br. II. 3, 4, 6),
ईश्वरो यजमानं भ्रेषोऽन्वेतोः (Kau. Br. XI. 8),
ईश्वरः प्राणो यदि नापः पराजेतोः (S'. Ar. I. 8),
स (पुरोडाशः) ईश्वरो यजमानं शुचा प्रदहः (Tait. Br. III. 2, 8, 5),

ईश्वरो वा एषोऽन्धो भवितोः (Tait. Br. III. 3, 5, 2,)
ईश्वरो वा एष दिशोऽनून्मदितोः[1] (Tait. Ar. V. 4, 7),
ईश्वरं वै रथन्तरमुद्गातुश्चक्षुः प्रमथितोः (Tāṇḍya. IX. 10, 2),

ईश्वरो वा एषो·······यजमानस्यायुः प्रत्यवहर्तुम् (Go. Br. II. 3, 6).

In the Aitareya Āraṇyaka also the word is used just as in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.

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1. In the passage ईशानः सर्वविद्यानामीश्वरः सर्वभूतानां·····ब्रह्मा शिवो मे अस्तु·····, occurring in the last portion (X. 47, 1) of Tait. Ār., the word 'Īśvara' is used in the same sanse as is found in the Atharvaveda (see above).

The Sûtra Literature.

After the Brāhmaṇa literature we should take up the Upaniṣads; but as most of them belong to a very late date, we shall consider their case later on. First let us consider the early Sūtra literature.

The word 'Īśvara' is very very rare in the Gṛhya and S'rauta Sūtras. In the S'āṅkhāyana S'rauta Sūtra it is used only once (अग्निर्वै कामो देवानामीश्वरः । 16,10,5). Here it is evidently used for Agni.

Similar is the case with the Dharma Sūtras. It is not at all found in the Āpastambīya and Bodhāyanīya Dharma Sūtras. In the Gautama Dharma Sūtra it is used only once in connection with the rules for a *snātaka*. The passage is योगक्षेमार्थमीश्वरमधिगच्छेत् (IX. 63), where the commentator explains ईश्वरम् by राजानम्.

Before examining the Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini we take up the Artha-S'āstra of Kauṭilya. The word 'Īśvara' occurs in this work only three times as follows :—

देशैश्च वंशनामधेयोपचारमीश्वरस्य॥। (p. 71)

देशनामधेयोपचारमनीश्वरस्य । (p. 71)

यत्रेश्वरांश्चाधिकृतांश्च राजा रक्षोपकारौपयिकार्थमाह । (p. 74)

The references are to the second edition. In all these passages the word is clearly used in the sense of a *rājā* or an administrative head.

The Aṣṭādhyāyī and the Mahābhāṣya.

As we have already stated, it was the evidence of these two works which mainly led us to the investigation of this question. It is therefore necessary to examine their evidence rather in detail. The word 'Īśvara' is used only eight times in the Aṣṭādhyāyī, as follows:—

(1) स्थेशभासपिसकसेा वरच् (III. 2, 175).

This only shows the derivation of the word from *Īś*.

(2) प्राग्रीश्वरान्निपाताः (I. 4, 56).

This is only an Adhikāra-Sūtra and refers to the Sūtra अधिरीश्वरे ।

(3) अधिरीश्वरे (I. 4, 97).

In the Mahābhāṣya and in the other old commentaries the illustration of this Sūtra is given as अधि ब्रह्मदत्ते पञ्चालाः, अधि पञ्चालेषु ब्रह्मदत्तः ।

(4) The same illustration is given in these works for यस्मादधिकं यस्य चेश्वरवचनं तत्र सप्तमी (II.3,9). It is also clear from the Mahābhāṣya on this Sūtra that, according to Patañjali, the words like *adhipati* and *svāmin* are all synonyms of 'Īśvara'.

(5) स्वामीश्वराधिपति-(II. 3, 39).

The illustration for the word 'Īśvara' in this Sūtra is given as गवामीश्वरः, गोष्वीश्वरः in the Kāśikā.

(6) ईश्वरे तोसुन्कसुनौ (III.4,13).

The illustrations of this (like ईश्वरोऽभिचरितोः) are all taken from the Brāhmaṇa literature and are of the same nature as have already been shown in connection with that literature.

(7) तस्येश्वरः (V. 1, 42). Its illustrations are:—
सर्वभूमेरीश्वरः सार्वभौमः। पृथिव्या ईश्वरः पार्थिवः।

(8) नञः शुचीश्वरक्षेत्रज्ञ-(VII. 3, 30).

Its illustration as regards the word 'Īśvara' is आनैश्वर्यम्। अनैश्वर्यम्।

Besides most of the illustrations just referred to, there also occur a few passages in the Mahābhāṣya which are very important for the point under consideration. They are :—

(1) नैवेश्वर आज्ञापयति नापि धर्मसूत्रकाराः पठन्ति–अपवादैरुत्सर्गा बाध्यन्तामिति (I. 1, 47 and V. 1, 119).

(2) तद्यथा लोक ईश्वर आज्ञापयति ग्रामाद् ग्रामान्मनुष्या आनीयन्ताम्। प्रागाङ्गं ग्रामेभ्यो ब्राह्मणा आनीयन्ताम्। (VI. 1,2).

(3) जित्पर्यायवचनस्यैव राजाद्यर्थम्।....सभा राजामनुष्यपूर्वा (II. 4, 23). इनसभम्। ईश्वरसभम्। तस्यैव न भवति। राजसभा। तद्विशेषणानां च न भवति। पुष्यमित्रसभा (I. 1, 66).

In this passage the words 'rājā', 'ina', and ' śvara' are clearly regarded as synonyms and king Pusyamitra is spoken of as an 'Īśvara'.

This detailed examination shows quite unambiguously that the word 'Īśvara' in these works invariably means a 'rājā' or an administrative head.

The first period in the history of the word 'Īśvara'.

This striking uniformity in the use of the word in the Aṣṭādhyāyī and the Mahābhāṣya, cannot, in our view, be regarded as merely accidental. We have already seen that in other works also, which belong definitely to a date anterior to that of the Aṣṭādhyāyī or Mahābhāṣya or which may be regarded even as their contemporary, the word has not been used, even once, in the sense of Parameśvara. It seems that in the Vedic literature the word had the general sense of 'a lord' or 'competent' which later on developed into that of a 'rājā' or an administrative head. The period covered by both these uses of the word may be regarded as the first period in the history of the word. This period obviously lasted till the time of the Mahābhāṣya, i. e. the 2nd Century B. C.

The second period in the history of the word 'Īśvara'.

But there are also some works in which the word has been used, not only in the above sense, but also in the sense of Parameśvara. The period to which such works belong we may take as the second period in the history of the word 'Īśvara.' In view of the

fact that at one time the word is definitely used in one sense (of a 'rājā' or 'capable of') and at a later time we find it almost definitely used in a later sense (of Parameśvara), we think, we are perfectly justified in assuming a transitional period in which the word is used, of course in a varying degree, in both the senses.

Among the works which can belong to this transitional or second period we may assign the first place to the Manusmṛti and the Bhagavadgītā, with the difference that while in the former there is a predominance of the first sense, in the latter the second sense is found much more often.

Let us first take the Manusmṛti. So far we have found that the word has been used only six times in this work, as follows :—

(1) तस्यार्थे सर्वभूतानां गोप्तारं धर्ममात्मजम् ।
ब्रह्मतेजोमयं दण्डमसृजत्पूर्वमीश्वरः ॥ (VII. 14).

Here the commentary of Kullūka says :—ब्रह्मा पूर्वं सृष्टवान्.

(2) प्राणायामैर्दहेद्दोषान् धारणाभिश्च किल्बिषम् ।
प्रत्याहारेण संसर्गान् ध्यानेनानीश्वरान् गुणान् ॥ (VI. 72).

Here cf. the same commentary :—"अनीश्वरान् गुणान् । ईश्वरस्य परमात्मनो ये गुणा न भवन्ति । क्रोधलोभमोहादयः ।

(3) मनसश्चाप्यहंकारमभिमन्तारमीश्वरम् (I. 14).

Here the same commentary says "ईश्वरं स्वकार्यकरणक्षमम् ।".

(4) ब्राह्मणो जायमानो हि पृथिव्यामधिजायते ।
ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां धर्मकोशस्य गुप्तये ॥ (I. 99).

(5) दैवतान्यभिगच्छेत्तु धार्मिकांश्च द्विजोत्तमान् ।
ईश्वरं चैव रक्षार्थं गुरूनेव च पर्वसु ॥ (IV. 153).

Cf. Kullūka :—रक्षार्थं राजादिकं गुरूंश्च ...."

(6) हन्याच्चौरमिवेश्वरः (IX. 278).

Cf. Kullūka :—"चौरवद्राजा निगृह्णीयात्".

It is evident that with the exception of the first two passages where the word seems to have got the later sense, the word in all the other passages has been clearly used in the earlier sense.

The case is rather different with the Bhagavadgīta. Here the word is generally used in the sense of Parameśvara ; e g.

भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् (IV. 6).
समवस्थितमीश्वरम् (XIII. 28).
समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् (XIII. 27).
ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति (XVIII. 60).

But here also the earlier sense of the word is not quite absent ; cf. for instance :—

ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी (XVI. 14).
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् (XVIII. 43).

The last period in the history of the word 'Īśvara'.

The above tendency found in the Manusmṛti and Bhagvadgītā went on increasing until we find that the word came to be used almost exclusively in the sense of Parameśvara alone. This stage we take as the last period in the history of the word 'Īśvara.'

Before giving illustrations for this exclusive use, it is better to take a general survey of the entire Upaniṣadic literature.

A reference to the 'Concordance to the Principal Upaniṣads' shows that, as far as the ten older Upaniṣads are concerned, the word 'Īśvara', not only has not been used in the sense of Parameśvara, but also, excepting the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, it has not been used at all; and in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad also, as already shown in the passage from the 14th Book (or Kāṇḍa) of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, it is unambiguously used only in the sense of 'capable of'. Of course like Īśāvāsyopaniṣad, already referred to, we find the word 'īś' (cf. यदा पश्यः पश्यते ·······ईशम्) in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad also. With regard to this, our position is the same as already stated in connection with the former Upaniṣad.

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad is not considered as old as the older ten Upaniṣads. In this the word is

used (e. g. तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरम्), but in a way which shows that it has not yet acquired the later meaning of Parameśvara. ईश्वराणाम् evidently means here राज्ञाम् .

The case is quite different with the sectarian Upanisads belonging to a later date. Here the word is, not only, very frequently used, but also has invariably got the sense of Śiva or Parameśvara, e.g.—

ईश्वरः परमो देवः (Brahmavidyopaniṣad 7)
ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानाम् (Mahānārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad 17, 5)
ईश्वरः शिव एव च (Atharva-Śikhopaniṣad 2).

These later Upaniṣads clearly belong to the third period of the history of the word. Of course here the sectarian sense of Śiva is more prominent, than that of Parameśvara. The reason underlying this difference will be shown later on.

In the non-sectarian literature which also belongs to this third period, the word 'Īsvara' has clearly got the sense of Parames'vara. For instance, let us take the philosophical Sūtras. As far as we can say the word is found only in three of these Sūtras, viz. Yoga, Nyāya and Sāṅkhya Sūtras; and in all cases it has the sense of Parameśvara alone; e. g.—

क्लेशकर्मविपाकाशयैरपरामृष्टः पुरुषविशेष ईश्वरः
(Yoga-Sūtra I. 24)

ईश्वरप्रणिधानाद्वा (Yoga-Sūtra I. 23)

ईश्वरः कारणं पुरुषकर्माफल्यदर्शनात् (Nyāya-Sūtra IV. 1, 19)

ईश्वरासिद्धेः (Sāṅkhya-Sūtra I. 92).

In the same way, in the whole of the subsequent philosophical literature the word 'Īsvara' has been used in the sense of Parameśvara alone; so much so, that Īsvara in the sense of Parameśvara is the main topic of such works as the Nyâya-kusumāñjali and Īśvarānumāna-cintāmaṇi. Similar is the case with the Purāṇa and the later Smṛti literature.

Development of the modern idea of Īśvara.

Before we point out the importance of the above, rather dreary discussion, let us first see if we can similarly trace the development of the modern idea of Īsvara also. We must confess that in this second part of our investigation we do not feel ourselves on such firm and sure grounds as we did in its first part. Still we think that we can trace more or less conclusively this development also. Before we start, let us first define what we mean by Īśvara these days. The most important point to be remembered in this connection is that the word is not a sectarian one now-a-days. We cannot say that like the words

'Rāma,' 'Kṛṣṇa', 'Śiva' etc. it is used only by a particular sect of the Hindus. On the other hand we find that all the Hindus, irrespective of their sects, as stated at the very outset, use this word in the sense of "omnific, omnipresent, eternal supreme God, who is the Lord of all, above all gods and at the same time is an object of our worship'.

In tracing this development we must start from the Vedic times; and first of all we must consider the Vedic (especially the Ṛgvedic) conception of gods. In the early Vedic period we do not find any god who can be regarded as occupying the position of Parameśvara. Gods like Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, Mitra, Pūṣan, are all functional (or कार्मिक) gods. In other words they are all departmental (नियतकर्माणः or विभज्यकर्मकारिणः) gods. None of these can be really regarded as 'the one god above all gods' (or देवाधिदेव). It is true that at times almost each of these gods is addressed as if he were an absolutely independent and supreme deity. But in reality this practice of the Vedic poets is only an exaggeration and is merely due to the effusion of sentiment on the part of the singer.

Of course there are Mantras from which it would appear that in course of time the seers came to realize that the various deities were but different forms or

aspects of one divinity ; cf. माहाभाग्याद्देवताया एक आत्मा बहुधा स्तूयते (Nirukta VII. 8).

This conception of the Ṛṣis was more of a pantheistic than of a monotheistic nature. Gradually the same idea assumed its final shape in the Vedāntic Brahman. But this idea of Brahman was not the same as that of Parameśvara. In the first place, Brahman existed only in the eyes of thinkers and philosophers. Unlike Parameśvara, it never existed in the eyes of the layman. The very fact that it is conceived in neuter gender shows that it can never be the object of popular worship. The god of popular worship is always conceived in masculine or feminine gender ; cf.

देवतिर्यङ्मनुष्यादौ पुंनामा भगवान्हरिः ।
स्त्रीनाम्नी श्रीश्च विज्ञेया नानयोर्विद्यते परम् ॥

The fact that no place whatsoever is assigned to Brahman in the Vedic Karmakāṇḍa would confirm the above view as regards Brahman. Statements like त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन (II. 45) in the Bhagavadgītā and the view of some Mīmāṁsakas, like Prabhākara, that the Veda is only concerned with Karmakāṇḍa and not with Brahman also confirm the above view.

It is true that even in the Vedas we find gods like Prajāpati who apparently seem to occupy the

place of Paramesvara. But in reality it is not so. Even Prajāpati, the forerunner of Brahmā, is only one, though rather more dignified, of so many gods, and cannot be regarded as the one god above all gods.

In view of all this we can safely maintain that in the Vedic period, including that of the Upaniṣads also, the popular religious needs were sufficiently satisfied by the functional or departmental Vedic gods, and no need was felt of Parmesvara at that time. On the other hand the need of philosophers who looked for unity in diversity was served by Brahman.

Besides Brahman, there is the Puruṣa of the Puruṣasūkta who also may apparently be regarded as equivalent of Paramesvara. The same idea was later utilized, in the Bhagavadgītā, for the idea of Puruṣottama. But a reference to passages like पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यद् भूतं यच्च भाव्यम् (Yajuḥ XXXI, 2) would show the pantheistic trend of this hymn, and as such our above remarks as regards Brahman would equally apply to Puruṣa also. Moreover the fact that the word 'Puruṣa' has been generally used, in the Vedic Saṁhitās themselves, in the sense of 'Man', and the use of that word in the sense of Virāṭ Puruṣa or 'the Universal Man' in the above Sūkta is only an exception (which, by the way, explains the

importance of the hymn) shows that the idea of Puruṣa in the latter sense was the creation of a Poet-Philosopher and was only meant for thinkers. It has nothing to do with the popular Vedic ritualism. The most important argument in our favour in this connection is that even in the Pūrva-Mīmāṁsāsūtra—the most authoritative work dealing with the rationale of the Vedic Karmakāṇḍa—no place is assigned to Parames'vara or Īs'vara. For the same reason it is a common belief among Pandits that Īs'vara is not recognised in the Mīmāṁsā system; only they do not understand its historic background. In this connection cf. also Bhagavadgītā (II. 42) :—

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
वेदवादरताः पार्थ ! नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥

This would also explain why the word 'Īśvara' in the sense of Parames'vara is not used in the Vedic literature.

Lord Buddha and the doctrine of Īśvara.

A consideration of the doctrine of Lord Buddha in this connection also confirms our above view. The popular view with regard to Lord Buddha, now-a-days, is that he refuted the doctrine of Īs'vara and therefore he was a 'Nāstika'. But we think there is no ground for this view. Let us first decide the real meaning of the word 'Nāstika'. The use of this

word in the sense of an atheist is not found in the older literature. Orginally the word only meant one who did not believe in the next world'; cf. Pāṇini IV. 4, 60 : अस्ति नास्ति दिष्टं मतिः ।

Gradually it came to mean 'one who reviles the Vedas' i. e. 'one who does not conform to the Vedic tradition'; cf. Manusmṛti II. 11 (नास्तिको वेदनिन्दकः). In case we find this word used for Buddha in the older literature, we must take it in the latter sense. It has nothing to do with the belief or non-belief in Īs'vara. The Sāṅkhyas and the Mīmāṁsakas, though they do not recognize God, are not called 'Nāstikas'; simply because they were not opposed to the Vedic tradition.

But we may not stop here and can go a step further. Because as far as we can say, Buddha never denounced or refuted the idea of Īs'vara in the sense of Parames'vara. This does not mean that he recognised it. This only means that till the time of Buddha the idea itself did not exist.

Instead of it, there were two ideas which occupied the place of Īśvara in his time. The one was of the functional Vedic gods, and the other of the absolue and attributeless Brahman. He accepted the former idea ; but in the place of Brahman he installed 'Dhamma'

or 'Dharma'. In our view, from a philosophical point of view, there is not much difference between Brahman and Dhamma. Both refer to abstract ideas. The idea of maintaining the whole universe and upholding every creation is common to both of them. Dhamma is only a collective name for all the eternal laws of the universe taken together. In fact it is 'The Law' of the universe. Can we not conceive the eternal and universal laws in the form of intelligence ? If we can, then Dharma which refers to the totality of those laws can easily be conceived as intelligence. If so, what is the difference between Brahman and Dhamma ? Brahman is regarded, not as *intelligent*, but only as pure *intelligence*.

This shows why Buddha, who recognised the traditional functional gods, Indra etc., and who substituted Dhamma for Brahman, did not denounce Īśvara. In reality the idea of Īśvara in the sense of Parameśvara did not even originate by that time.[1]

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1. Of course there are a few references to Īśvara or to Īśvaravādins in Pali literature, but they evidently refer to a god more or less similar to the departmental Vedic gods ; and some of the references may also belong to a time much posterior to Buddha. The same remark applies to similar references found in the Jain literature also ; e.g., cf. Sathānāṅg-Sūtra 607.

S'aivism and Iśvara.

Let us now see how the word 'Īśvara' at last came to be used in the sense of Parameśvara. An attempt is made in the following to answer this question.

Modern Hinduism is said to be a fusion of the Nigama-dharma and the Āgama-dharma. Nigama means Veda and Āgama refers to Tantra. Thus we can say that the basis of Modern Hinduism is a fusion of the Vedic and Tāntric Dharmas. An examination of popular gods as well as of the daily and other kinds of ritualism of Modern Hinduism also clearly shows that it is very much different, both in spirit and form, from the pure Vedic Dharma. But it does not mean that Tāntricism is later in origin than the Vedic religion. On the contrary, there are grounds for holding the former, at least as far as India is concerned, even as older than the latter. It is true that in our literature we do not find such an old description of Tāntricism as that of the Vedic religion. But it only means that Tāntricism came to influence the Vedic people gradually. Moreover, the esoteric nature of Tāntricism and the fact that Tāntric worship is of an individualistic nature as compared with the Vedic ritualism which, requiring as it does the assistance of a number of priests for its performance, is congregational, also contributed a great deal to the non-pre-

servation in literature of Tāntricism in its oldest form.

The excavations of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa also have shown the great antiquity of Tāntric culture in India. Śiva occupies a most important place in this culture; and the fact that Śiva-liṅgas in large numbers have been excavated there clearly proves the then existence of Tāntricism. On similar grounds, we think, we are justified in designating the pre-Vedic culture of India as Tāntricism. Some people give it the name of Asuric culture. We know that in Vedic literature the Asuras are described as the elders of the Devas; which only means that, at least in India, the Āsura or Tāntric culture is older than the Vedic culture.

The fact that in the Purāṇas and the allied literature Asuras and Daityas like Bāṇāsura and Rāvaṇa are almost always described as the devotees of Śiva also shows an intimate relation, from the oldest times, between Śiva and the Tāntric (or Āsura) culture. We know that a particular variety of the Śiva-liṅga is also known as Bāṇa-liṅga. Probably it was Bāṇāsura himself who substituted rather smaller stones for heavy ones for their worship as Śiva-liṅgas.

The above statement as regards the close relationship between Śiva and the Tāntric culture does not necessarily mean that the chief god of that culture was designated as 'Śiva' from the very beginning. It

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appears that the Vedic Aryas when they entered India found this S'aiva or Tāntric culture most prevalent. In the beginning they were naturally hostile to it as is shown by such contemptuous expressions as शिश्नदेवाः applied in the Ṛgveda to the indigenous people; but gradually on account of its vast prevalence they themselves came to be influenced by it. This was the reason which perhaps led to the fusion of the pure Vedic god Rudra and the Tāntric 'Śiva'. The difference between the Rudra of the Ṛgveda and the Rudra of the Yajurveda can perhaps be explained by this fusion alone.

This influence of Tāntricism upon the Vedic culture was so far-reaching that gradually Śaivism asumed the form of an almost universal religion even among the Vedic people. It is due to this that Vaiṣṇavism though based on the pure Vedic god Viṣṇu appears as only a new sect when compared with Śaivism.

Spread of the word Iśvara through S'aivism.

In reality it was through the influence of Śaivism that the word 'Īśvara' in the sense of Parameśvara became so popular. We have already seen how the word 'Īśāna' gradually became a synonym of Śiva. Both 'Īśvara' and 'Īśāna' are derived from the same root. Still the former word did not acquire the

meaning of Śiva in the same direct way. In the Śvetāśvatara and other older Śaiva Upaniṣads 'Mahes'vara' and not 'Īs'vara' has been used for Śiva. The passage from Kālidāsa हरिर्यथैकः पुरुषोत्तमः स्मृतो महेश्वरस्त्र्यम्बक एव नापरः (Raghuvaṁs'a III. 49) also confirms the same view.

But gradually in the Śaivite literature itself 'Īs'vara' came to be used for 'Mahes'vara.' We have already seen how 'Īs'vara' has been often used for Śiva in the later Śaivite Upaniṣads. In the Tantras also 'Īs'vara' is very frequently used for Śiva. Many of the Tantras even begin with the words पार्वती उवाच and ईश्वर उवाच. In the S'aiva Dars'ana also 'Īs'vara' is not only very frequently used, but it is also a technical term of that philosophy for S'iva; compare for instance the 'Sarvadars'anasaṅgraha'[1] and also the words of Kālidāsa :

यस्मिन्नीश्वर इत्यनन्यविषयः शब्दो यथार्थाक्षरः ।

(Vikramorvas'īyam).

Thus it is clear that the word 'Īs'vara' became so popular only through the influence of S'aivism.

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1. Cp. पतिपदार्थः शिवोऽभिमतः (Anandashrama ed. of the text only, p. 66)., Cp. also पशुपतिरीश्वरः (Śaṅkara's Comm. on Vedānta-sūtra II. 2, 37), and शम्भुरीशः पशुपतिः शिवः शूली महेश्वरः । ईश्वरः शर्व ईशानः··············त्र्यम्बकस्त्रिपुरान्तकः············स्थाणुः······ (Amara-kośa I. 1, 25-26 and 29-30).

Iśvara and Darśana.

But its use in the sense of non-sectarian Paramesvara did not take place until the word had not left the above sectarian world and had not become an object of independent discussion in the field of general philosophy. So long as Īsvara or Mahesvara was only a sectarian god, it could not have become an object of discussion in the non-sectarian general philosophy. For this very reason perhaps it was only gradually that Īsvara began to be discussed in the general philosophical literature[1]. This also explains

1. The statement that Īśvara or Maheśvara was in the beginning only a sectarian god and that it was only gradually that it came in the purview of the general philosophy and assumed the form of non-sectarian Parameśvara is clearly borne out by the following quotations from the Ṣaḍdarśana-samuccaya of Rājaśekhara Sūri—a Jain author of the 14th or 15th century A. D. :—

Regarding the Nyāya system (called here Yoga-matam or Śaivam) of philosophy; he says :—

अथ योगमतं ब्रूमः शैवमित्यपराभिधम् ।
ते दण्डधारिणः प्रौढकोपीनपरिधायिनः ॥
कम्बलिकाप्रावरणा जटापटलधालिनः ।
भस्मोद्धूलनकर्तारो नीरसाहारसेविनः ॥

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यजमानो वन्दमानो वक्ति तेषां कृताञ्जलिः ।
ॐ नमः शिवायेत्येवं शिवाय नम इत्यसौ ॥

why in the philosophical Sūtras there is such a meagre discussion of Īśvara. Probably there was only a beginning of that discussion at the time when the

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तेषां च शंकरो देवः सृष्टिसंहारकारकः ।
तस्यावताराः सारा ये तेऽष्टादश तदर्चिताः ॥
\+ \+ \+
पूजनं प्रणिधानं च तेषां ज्ञेयं तदागमात् ।
अक्षपादो गुरुस्तेषां तेन ते ह्याक्षपादकाः ॥
उत्तमां संयमावस्थां प्राप्ता नग्ना भ्रमन्ति ते ॥
प्रमाणानि च चत्वारि प्रत्यक्षं लैङ्गिकं तथा ।
उपमानं च शाब्दं च तत्फलानि पृथक् पृथक् ॥
तत्त्वानि षोडशामुत्र प्रमाणादीनि तद्यथा ।
प्रमाणं च प्रमेयं च संशयश्च प्रयोजनम् ॥
\+ \+ \+
अयमेषां विशेषस्तु यत्प्रजल्पन्ति पर्षदि ॥
शैवीं दीक्षां द्वादशाब्दीं सेवित्वा योऽपि मुञ्चति ।
दासीदासोऽपि भवति सोऽपि निर्वाणमृच्छति ॥

As regards the Vaiśeṣika system of philosophy, he says :—

अथ वैशेषिकं ब्रूमः पाशुपतान्यनामकम् ।
लिङ्गादि यौगवत्तेषां ते ते तीर्थकरा अपि ॥
वैशेषिकाणां योगेभ्यो मानतत्त्वगता भिदा ।
प्रत्यक्षमनुमानं च मते तेषां प्रमाद्वयम् ॥
\+ \+ \+
यौगे वैशेषिके तन्त्रे प्रायः साधारणी क्रिया ।
आचार्यः शङ्कर इति नाम प्रागभिधापरम् ॥
\+ \+ \+
शिवेनोलूकरूपेण कणादस्य मुनेः पुरः ॥
मतमेतत् प्रकथितं तत औलूक्यमुच्यते ॥

philosophical Sūtras were written. For the same reason not much importance was attached to that discussion. But gradually that tendency went on increasing and naturally we find *Īśvara-siddhi* as one of the most important topics in the later philosophical literature of India, so much so that such important independent treatises as the 'Nyāya-kusumañjali' and 'Īśvarānumānacintāmaṇi' have been exclusively devoted to that topic.

The importance of this investigation.

The whole investigation is obviously of great importance for clearly understanding the history of Indian Philosophy and Religion. Many a knotty point of that history can easily be explained in the light of this investigation. For instance the question as to why there is such a meagre discussion of an important

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अक्षपादेन ऋषिणा रचितत्वात्तु यौगिकम् ।
आक्षपादमिति ख्यातं प्रायस्तुल्यं मतद्वयम् ॥

Cp. also the Ṣaḍ-darśana-samuccaya of Haribhadra-sūri : आक्षपादमते देवः सृष्टिसंहारकृच्छिवः. Regarding the Vaiśeṣikas he says : देवताविषये भेदो नास्ति नैयायिकैः समम् ।

Moreover, the fact that both the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems of philosophy are described as शिष्टापरिगृहीत in the Commentaries on the Vedānta-sūtra II. 2, 17 (अपरिग्रहाच्चात्यन्तमनपेक्षा) would show that according to the tradition both the systems must have had their origin in some Non-Vedic or Āgamic form of religion. This also indirectly supports the above contention.

topic like that of Īśvara in the philosophical Sūtras can be answered, we think, only in the way in which we have done so. Futher we cannot understand the rise and great expansion of a Godless system like Buddhism in the India of B. C. if we assume the existence and prevalence of the modern idea of Parameśvara at that time also. Surely a religion of the same kind, if preached now-a-days, would not have the same prospects.

Besides, the investigation is not without interest from the point of view of literary history also. If our conclusions are true, we find here a new material for determining the chronology of many a Sanskrit work. For instance, the question whether the Vyākaraṇa Mahābhāṣya and the Yoga Sūtra are by the same author, can be definitely decided in the negative in the light of our investigation. Because the author of the Yoga Sūtra who uses the word 'Īśvara' definitely for Parameśvara must be not only different from, but also much later than, the author of the Mahābhāṣya, who uses that word only in its older sense. On the same grounds we can maintain that the Manusmṛti and the Bhagavadgītā are later than the Mahābhāṣya.

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